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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 004729

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/13/2021  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [TU](#) [CY](#)  
SUBJECT: TURKISH MFA DAS SEES CYPRUS TECHNICAL TALKS GOING  
NOWHERE FAST

REF: A. NICOSIA 1367

[1](#)B. NICOSIA 1345

Classified By: PolCouns Janice G. Weiner, reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

1.(C) Summary: In an August 11 meeting, a pessimistic Turkish MFA Cyprus DAS equivalent Levent Bilman told us that he saw little chance for progress on the island at present, even on the technical talks. While Bilman is not a decisionmaker, his views are a barometer of how more senior MFA officials may be approaching the issue. End summary.

2.(C) According to Bilman, Turkish Cypriot (TC) and Greek Cypriot (GC) advisers talked three times recently (August 1, 3 and 8) with UN rep Moller; there had been a Talat-Moller meeting as well. The Papadapolous-Talat meeting had not occurred as planned on August 10.

3.(C) In Bilman,s view, absent an imposed structure and time deadlines, little will happen. In the aftermath of the Annan plan, he said, the GCs had declined third party involvement, arbitration and "suffocating" deadlines -- all of which he described as essential for forward movement. Even to get Talat and Papadopolous to sign the two papers in early July had taken an intervention from SYG Annan in New York, he added.

4.(C) The technical committees -- set to discuss ten issues -- were to begin technical talks, per Bilman, as soon as the parties had exchanged lists on July 31. They exchanged their lists: The TC paper stated that there must be a UN solution and restated the basic parameters (bicommunal, bizonal, federal). The GC paper, according to Bilman, listed nine broad areas, similar to what they had presented at Burgenstock. No technical talks have started, however. The stalemate, Bilman claimed, resulted from GC insistence that discussions on substantive issues start simultaneously. That, he stressed, was not the deal.

5.(C) With respect to Moller, Bilman said the TCs (and Turks) do not see him as constructive. Rather than moving the process forward (a la DeSoto, who put to good use creative diplomacy and the SYG's backing, and even like Gambari during his latest visit), Bilman characterized Moller as pushing the TCs unhelpfully to sell GC ideas to Talat. Bilman personally believes that Moller must go; he has too much baggage.

6.(C) Bilman described Talat as increasingly alienated from Moller and irritated by the GCs. Talat and the TCs remain committed to a solution, Bilman stated, but the GC attitude is helping solidify the status quo. The TCs do not want an indefinite process; they want a timeline and progress. He claimed the GOT was not attempting to influence Talat; it was his game. The GCs, for their part, had proposed examining the facts on the island and the federal systems of the world.

7.(C) On the issue of "community" versus "side", Bilman stated emphatically that the TCs had moved past that barrier; the "community" language was done with in 1975. The TCs are a side or a party and won't be degraded to the level of "community" versus the "President of the Republic," he stated. This language was revived in the Papadapolous/Annan Paris decree. (Note: The language that so annoyed the Turks and TCs. End note.)

8.(C) With respect to Famagusta/Varosha, Bilman explained the context in which it originally had been discussed in Luxembourg. Talat adviser Pertev had stated at one point that the GCs could have Varosha if the TCs could open all ports including Ercan airport. His GC counterpart responded that to accept such a position would amount to political suicide.

9.(C) The idea of technical talks, Bilman reiterated, was to take care of everyday, practical issues on the island; not get into final settlement issues. When there had been a murder in the south, the suspect escaped to the north and Talat had begged for some information so they could jail him. The response was that the GCs couldn't deliver any information because they did not recognize the legitimacy of the "government" in the north; the TCs had to release the man. With respect to sharing information on avian flu (AI), the GCs sent a fax message to the Turkish MFA with regard to AI on Cyprus and declined to discuss the issue with the "illegal regime". Those are the technical issues, Bilman said, on which the GCs decline to engage. Instead they propose that the property issue, which Bilman described as the core of a Cyprus settlement, be discussed as part of technical talks.

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10.(C) Comment: The Turks believe that Moller has had his chance; they will no longer budge on this. Gambari, per Bilman, is on vacation until the end of August. The Turks know it is in their EU accession interest to get a UN process moving; it is difficult to see the up side for them in torpedoing technical talks. Whoever said what to whom on the island, if they can't even get the technical talks up and running, this is going nowhere fast. We need to find another angle. End comment.

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